

# NOTES FROM THE:

## Comptroller Officer Assignments

by Capt Timothy Little, DSN 665-2304, Timothy.Little@afpc.randolph.af.mil

As of this writing, Capt Ed Leszynski and I are in the middle of matching assignments for the first Air Force Assignment System (AFAS) cycle. Though there has been a lot of publicity on AFAS, I would like to use this article to address some of the most asked questions about the new system.

Q. Will officers still have the 7-day option available where they can separate from the service instead of taking an assignment?

A. The 7-day option will not change. Officers with an active duty service commitment could still be sent on the assignment from which they chose to 7-day opt. For example, an officer may 7-day opt if selected for a remote tour, however, if they owe 14 months on an ADSC, they may still serve the 12 month assignment before separating.

Q. Under the new system who has the final say in selecting officers?

A. Assignment teams at AFPC — using input from the officer being assigned and their commander along with input from MAJCOMs, functional leaders, and gaining commanders — will match officers to assignments based on Air Force requirements and specific career field dynamics. Direct hire (i.e., commander) and nominative (i.e., joint duty) positions will continue to be filled under the same processes they're currently worked.

Q. What if a preference worksheet (PW) is forwarded to AFPC without the Commander's Block filled out?

A. With the changes in the AFAS, the system will not accept any electronic transfer of a PW without the commander's coordination block filled. An officer will not have a PW on file until this is accomplished. (Exception: Officers participating in in-residence PME (ISS/SSS), the Exchange Officer Program, the Air Force Intern Program, AFIT, and Defense Attache will be allowed to forward their PWs directly to AFPC.

Q. The Preference Worksheet sounds a great deal like the "old Form 90," is it?

A. The Preference Worksheet (AF Form 4057) has some similarities to the Form 90. The concept behind the PW is to give officers and their commanders input into their next assignment. Since the commander's re-

view is mandatory, hopefully officers and commanders will jointly discuss what type of assignment would be best for them before the PW is sent to AFPC.

Q. Aren't these changes just bringing the system back used prior to the Officer Volunteer Assignment System?

A. The new changes to the AFAS are a combination of new ideas along with taking the best aspects of past systems. Having officers and commanders give direct input into the system is similar to the process used in the past. Keeping the process visible using the Personnel Requirements Display (PRD) is an idea started with the electronic bulletin board during the early 90s. The intent of the review was to take the best aspects of past assignment systems, combine them with today's technological advances, to ensure the assignment system productively serves the Air Force for years to come.

Q. How does time on station (TOS) figure into making assignments under the new system?

A. TOS will continue to be a significant factor in the assignment process; however, the new system will provide added flexibility to maximize officer professional development opportunities, particularly for CONUS to CONUS assignments. However, TOS minimums will not change with the new system—they will remain 3 years for CONUS to CONUS and 2 years for CONUS to OVERSEAS unless waived as in the best interest of the Air Force. All waivers must be approved by AFPC/CC.

Q. Will officers on remote tours or in a "mandatory move" status still be given priority when assignments are made?

A. Mandatory movers will continue to have priority in the overall process—they will not be involuntarily left at their current location beyond their mandatory move date. On the other hand, they will not have priority for a specific assignment based solely on their move status. Each assignment will be based on a number of factors, such as time on station, OPD, officer qualifications, officer preferences, commanders' recommendations, and will include move status to adequately account for the mandatory movers.

Q. What say does the gaining commander have

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if assignments are being made between the officer, losing commanders, and AFPC?

A. Gaining commanders' primary say will be in identifying the requirement and the specifics of what type of officer (grade, AFSC, special qualifications, etc.) is needed to meet mission requirements. The assignment team will work with losing commanders to identify a PCS-eligible officer who meets these requirements. Gaining commanders can elevate their challenge of an assignment to the Group Commander who will maintain a "challenge" authority should they believe that the officer's qualifications are questionable. Each "challenge" will be worked on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Will special duties still have the same application procedures in place as they do now or will AFPC do a best match?

A. Established application procedures for special duties will remain the same as they are now. Special duties which do not have established application procedures (i.e., Recruiting Service) will be worked by AFPC as a best match the same as other assignments. Officers must contact us for releasability for special duty assignments prior to the member applying. Interested officers can then indicate their interest on their PWs.

Q. Will you update the Requirements Listing throughout the 30 days in the visibility window?

A. No, we will place the requirements on the Requirements Listing on the first day of the visibility window and the requirements will stay the same for the next 30 days. At the end of this period, the Requirements Listing will be turned off. We do not want anyone "waiting for the next update" to submit their PW. The next update to the Requirements Listing will not be until the first day of the next visibility window. However, the Authorization Listing which shows Air Force positions by AFSC and location will be available all the time and will be updated monthly.

Q. What happens if an officer does not have a PW on file when AFPC matches assignments?

A. All officers (especially those identified as vulnerable) should have a PW on file. It is incumbent upon the officer to have a PW which accurately portrays his/her assignment preferences. If the officer is being considered for an assignment, but has no PW on file, the AFPC Officer Assignment Team (OAT) will attempt to contact the member's commander. If AFPC still does not receive a PW from the officer, the AFPC OAT will

make the best assignment match possible without the officer's preferences.

Q. Can an officer check the status of his/her PW?

A. Yes, an officer may check to see if his/her current PW is on file through the AFPC Assignments home page. If there is no PW in the system or the PW shown is not the latest PW the officer submitted, then the officer should check with his/her commander to see if he/she has coordinated on the PW. If the commander has forwarded the PW, but it does not show up in the system, the officer may contact AFPC/DPAPS at DSN 665-5858 to report the problem. In addition, an e-mail notification will be sent to both the officer and the commander when a PW is received by AFPC.

Q. Can an officer volunteer for a certain region or theatre?

A. Yes, we have a CONUS map, which indicates geographic regions, and an overseas map, which indicates theatres on the pulldown menus for location on the PW. An officer may also choose a particular state or country. This will allow the officer to be considered for more jobs than just at one specific location. For instance, an officer may volunteer for MacDill AFB, the state of Florida, the Southeastern United States or simply CONUS depending on how specific his/her preferences are.

Q. How/When will I find out when I have been selected for an assignment?

A. When assignment selections have been accomplished, (OATs will initially notify commanders and their respective MAJCOM assignments staffs, via e-mail, of the assignment matches involving their officers. The timing of this e-mail notification will vary depending on the number of assignments being matched during each cycle. Your current commander is responsible for accomplishing your "official" notification of the assignment upon receipt of formal assignment instructions from your OAT. The e-mail sent out by the OAT notifying commanders and MAJCOMs when assignments are matched, should not be confused with the official assignment notification (with assignment instructions) which flows via PC-III or message to the commanders' support staffs.

As a reminder, effective 13 March, the telephone number for the AFPC FM assignment team is DSN 665-2304 and commercial (210)565-2304.